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ABSTRACT

The basic purpose of the study described here was the identification of competencies (skills) of principals of normal schools in Turkey in order to put together effective competency-based training programs for school administrators. Competencies were identified and ranked according to evaluations (perceptions) of the principals themselves, their teachers, and their supervisors. An evaluative model generated data intended for use in job analysis and administrator selection, appointment, and promotion. The methodology and model utilized in this study can be used for comparative analysis, since it involves common competencies in administrative processes. (Author)

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COMPETENCIES OF THE EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATOR: A STUDY OF THE COMPETENCIES OF THE PRINCIPALS OF NORMAL SCHOOLS IN TURKEY

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One of the unconventional methods sought for, tested and utilized in the pre-service and in-service training of educational administrators has been competency based education. There have been conceptual writings and field studies about programs of this kind which are being implemented in the colleges of medicine, engineering and education in some of the leading universities of the United States.

The basic purpose of the study reported here is the need assessment of competencies for principals of normal schools by identifying and ranking ideal and real competencies of these administrators. The rationale of the study is that in order to dimentionalize a competency based program, needed competencies must be identified. The study was limited to principals of normal schools in Turkey. Competencies were identified and ranked through the evaluations (perceptions) of the principals themselves, their teachers and superiors; that is, provincial superintendents of schools, and the supervisors of the Ministry of Education.

The study permitted an analysis of competencies of principals within a specific evaluative model and the alignment of identified and ranked competencies with the pre-service and in-service programs of these principals. It was assumed that the study would provide data for the job analysis, selection, appointment and promotion of administrators. In addition, the study would test a new methodology and model for comparative studies as far as the competencies of the administrators are concerned, since it involves some common competencies in the field of administrative processes, leadership, human relations and the like.

Methodology

The study was made on the total population of the principals (89), their teachers (2696), provincial superintendents of schools (66) and supervisors of the Ministry of Education (111); the last two groups as the superiors of the principals. The percentage of the participants in relation to the population varied between 89.2% and 100%.

The areas of competencies and the competencies in these areas in the draft instrument, both ideal and real forms having the same content, were drawn from previous literature. The instrument contained 18 areas of competence with 5 competencies in each to be ranked from five "complete" to one "none". The instrument also included from 13-23 demographic items in terms of each referent group. In order to develop the instrument, five representatives with background administrative experience in normal schools were selected from each referent group and brought together for a three-day seminar. In this seminar, the instrument was administered three times, each competency statement was discussed and developed, and a plan was constructed for full scale instrument administration.

Three assumptions were considered necessary for the validation of instrumentation. It would be valid if the consensus expressed in the ideal form was

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higher than that in the real form; if the importance expressed in the ideal form was higher than that in the real form; and if the self-perceptions of the principals was higher than the perceptions of the other three referent groups as far as the real form was concerned. The standard deviation was used as an index of consensus and the mean of scores as an index of importance, both of which required use of T-scores to rank competencies within the framework of the Quadrant Assessment Model (QAM).

Twenty-one experts from the Planning and Research Department of the Ministry of Education were charged with the administration of both forms of the instruments in 66 provinces in Turkey. All forms were administered within one week, the ideal form being implemented first and the real one following. These experts were later interviewed by the writer to gather their impressions and experience for further research.

The QAM was constructed in order to rank the ideal and real perceptions of the referent groups and to compare them. It was based on the interaction of the two kinds of perceptions, ideal and real, with two degrees of importance, high and low. As a result of the interaction of these variables, four relationships occur within the structure of the model. High-ideal, low-ideal, high-real and low-real. Both the areas of competencies and the competencies themselves were ranked in terms of these quadrants through the use of T-scores.

The areas and competencies which were perceived within high-ideal, high-real relationships were ranked in the top left quadrant of the model. These were the competencies which ought to be possessed and are possessed by the normal school principals. Therefore, according to the basic assumption of the study, they have to be included in the pre-service training program for such administrators.

The top-right quadrant of the model contained the high-ideal but low-real perceptions. They implied that these competencies, although they ought to have been possessed by the principals, were in fact not. Therefore, these would need to be introduced into the in-service training programs. The low-ideal but high-real perceptions were ranked in the bottom left quadrant of the model. Its implication was that these competencies were possessed by the principals to an undesirable degree. Having been over-emphasized, they ought to be balanced and compensated by the practicing administrators themselves. The last quadrant, bottom right of the model, included the competencies perceived as low-ideal and low-real. Being unimportant and not possessed by the principals, they ought not to be introduced into the training programs of the administrators, unless proven otherwise through additional research.

The statistical analysis utilized in the study can be described in two groups. In terms of descriptive statistics, frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation and T-scores were used. Kendall's Concordance Correlation, analysis of variance, and (t)-test techniques from the field of inferential statistics were utilized to test the methodology.

Findings and Interpretations

These were grouped under five headings: demographic description of the subjects, instrument related findings and interpretations, competency related findings and interpretation, those related to the referent groups and those related to the quadrant assessment model.

In terms of the demographic description of the subjects, the personal variables of the total group and sub-groups were presented and compared in frequency counts and percentages.

With regard to the findings related to the instrument, the ideal and real standard deviation and mean figures of the referent groups were tabulated. The results were interpreted as to verify the three assumptions about the validity of the instrument.

Under the heading of the findings related to the areas of competencies and the competencies, the ideal and real competencies of the normal school principals were presented in terms of five alternative selections. Also, the most and the least important competency areas were compared through the use of mean and standard deviation figures in four referent groups.

On the subject of the findings related to the referent groups, the results of Kendall's Concordance Correlation confirmed a high degree of consensus in terms of the ranking of the competency areas by the referent groups. The analysis of variance among these groups revealed significant differences in their perceptions of competency areas. In terms of the ideal competency areas, only the principals and their teachers did not differ significantly. As for the real competency areas, supervisors of the Ministry of Education differed significantly from the provincial superintendents and the principals. Also, significant differences were observed between the groups of the superintendents and the principals, and between those of the principals and their teachers. As far as the variance in each group was concerned, in terms of ideal competency areas, only the superintendents did not differ significantly within themselves. On the other hand, all groups differed significantly within themselves as far as the perception of the real competency areas were concerned.

The findings related to the model were tabulated in two groups as those concerning the competency areas and those concerning the competencies themselves. In both cases, the T-scores of the total group and the four referent groups were presented within the framework of the quadrant assessment model. Both the competency areas and the competencies which acquired absolute consensus, that is, perceived by all groups in the same quadrant, were also dealt with and interpreted separately.

The problem itself, the validity of the instrument and the model, the educational needs of the principals, were summarized. Conclusions and suggestions based on this summary were presented along two dimensions as necessary training and further research. Listings of the competencies and the data of this study are available to interested persons, particularly to those who would like to employ them in comparative - cross cultural studies. Such individuals may contact Dr. Bursalioglu or the editors of the Notebook.

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